

THE AIR FORCE MUSEUM FOUNDATION

The United States Air Force Museum, like so many other museums, has an “angel” to help out when funding is short.

The Museum’s angel is the Air Force Museum Foundation, Inc., a philanthropic, non-profit organization whose stated purpose is “to assist the United States Air Force Museum where federal funds are not available.”

Three Daytonians were the driving force behind the establishment of the Foundation, and signed the original State of Ohio charter in 1960. They were C. Frank Scarborough, former president of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in Fairborn; attorney James F. Barnhart, formerly with the law firm of Pickrel, Schaeffer and Ebeling in Dayton; and former Dayton disc jockey John Fraim (now of Columbus, Ohio).

At the time the Foundation came into being, the signers of the Charter could have little foresight into what the ultimate outcome of the Foundation's efforts would be. The Foundation has contributed over \$19 million for construction of Museum facilities, plus have purchased many items such as wheelchairs for handicapped visitors, books for the Museum research library, and picnic tables. In addition, many exhibits are in place today only through their direct assistance.

The funds raised from 1960 to 1970 came largely from public contributions, donations by industry, gifts from philanthropic foundations, and many individual organizations, plus an Air Force in-service fund drive in 1970.

Thanks to the Air Force Museum Foundation, the long standing need for a new building was finally met in 1971 when a new \$6 million Museum building was completed on a 400-acre site at historic Wright Field. A \$1 million visitor reception center was added in 1976, also through

contributions by the public to the Museum Foundation.

When expansion of the Museum became a major project of the early 1980s, the Foundation again agreed to help raise the necessary funds. With the expanded structures expected to double the size of the existing Museum, the cost was estimated at \$10.8 Million. In 1984 the U.S. Congress appropriated \$5.4 million toward the project, with the proviso that the Foundation raise the matching \$5.4 million from the private sector.

Construction of the addition was completed in December 1987 and the new "Modern Flight Hangar" was opened to the public in April 1988.

The Foundation's last project was the planning, financing and construction of a new 500-seat IMAX Theatre that opened in May 1991. The \$7.3 million Theatre and expanded lobby were transferred to the Department of the Air Force by the Foundation. The Theatre is operated by the Foundation.

The Foundation receives its major funds from donations, bequests, and from operation of the IMAX Theatre, Morphis MovieRide Theatre, souvenir shops and cafeteria in the Museum.

The Museum Foundation's newly renovated souvenir shops carry an assortment of aviation-related items including jewelry, china, photo prints, sweatshirts, jackets, ties, plaques, patches, desk accessories, aircraft models and souvenir items at reasonable prices. They also carry executive type gifts. The shop offers an extensive collection of aviation-related books and magazines. Substantial discounts are offered to "Friends of the Air Force Museum," a Museum membership organization of the Foundation. Memberships include a quarterly "Friends" Journal and other benefits.